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ABSTRACT

Substance abuse has long been recognized as a precipitating factor in many domestic violence incidents. The main type of substance abuse is alcohol usage. Forty-six percent of the offenders reported being dependent on or abusing alcohol, while another 28% were found to be dependent on opiates, cocaine, marijuana, or inhalants. Nearly two-fifths of the domestic violence offenders said that they had been drinking at the time they were arrested for domestic violence. This paper provides tools, tips, and resources that communities can use to help reduce substance abuse and domestic violence. Included is a list of national organizations, publications, and community leaders who have expertise in the domestic violence area. It also contains stories of how some communities have responded to this problem. (JDM)

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Technical Assistance Packet

Join Together:
A National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse and Gun Violence

www.jointogether.org/

April 2000

ED 456 365

Description of the Issue

According to the Institute for Teaching and Research on Women at Towson University in Maryland, substance abuse has long been recognized as a precipitating factor in many domestic violence incidents. Current substance abuse is high among domestic violence offenders, with 54 percent being current heavy users of one or more substances. The main type of substance abuse is alcohol usage, with 46 percent of the offenders being dependent or abusing. 28 percent were found dependent on opiates, cocaine, marijuana, or inhalants. Nearly two-fifths of the domestic violence offenders said that they had been drinking at the time they were arrested for domestic violence.

What follows is a list of national organizations, publications, community leaders with an expertise in domestic violence area, and community stories.

National Organizations

US Department of Justice, Violence Against Women Office
The Violence Against Women Office leads a comprehensive national effort to combine tough new federal laws with assistance to states and localities to fight domestic violence and other crimes against women. This office funds programs and provides information and materials to interested groups.
810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531; Tel: 202-616-8894; Fax: 202-307-3911; www.usdoj.gov/vawo/

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) is a membership organization dedicated to the empowerment of battered women and their children and to the elimination of personal and societal violence in the lives of women and their children. Information is provided on their website. In addition, publications can be ordered for a cost.
P.O. Box 18749, Denver, CO 80218; Tel: 303-839-1852; Fax: 303-831-9251; www.ncadv.org/

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Justice Information Center
A Service of the National Criminal Justice Reference Service
The National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) is one of the most extensive sources of information on criminal and juvenile justice. This resource has articles, publications about domestic violence on it website. In addition weblinks to other organizations with information about domestic violence are provided.
www.ncjrs.org/victdv.htm

Family Violence Prevention Fund
This is a national, non-profit organization that focuses on domestic violence prevention and public policy reform. They offer training to professionals such as judges and police officers to respond appropriately when they are confronted with battering. They work with healthcare providers across the country to educate them about how to identify and help victims of abuse and their children. And they have developed a multi-faceted public education campaign to raise awareness about the problem and let people know what they can do to get involved in their communities. Materials are also available through their catalog.
383 Rhode Island St., Suite #304, San Francisco, CA 94103-5133; Tel: 415-252-8900; Fax: 415-252-8991; Eml: fund@fvpf.org; www.fvpf.org/

Men and Women Against Domestic Violence
Men and Women Against Domestic Violence is an internet-based coalition of men and women working to address the issue of domestic violence. They offer information and resources including a frequently asked questions section, statistics and weblinks to other organizations.
silcom.com/~paladin/madv/

Feminist Majority Foundation Domestic Violence Information Center
This resource contains domestic violence hotlines and resource information.
www.feminist.org/911/crisis.html

Publications and How To Order Them

The publications listed here are both free and of modest cost.

- *Domestic Violence: National Directory of Professional Services* - This comprehensive book specifically addresses the information needs of victims and direct service providers, while informing other groups affected by domestic violence of their responsibilities with regard to assisting victims. Center on Crime, Communities & Culture, 400 West 59th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10019; Tel: 212-548-0135; Fax: 212-548-4677

- *Domestic Violence and AOD Abuse* is a bibliography from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. This publication lists approximately 100 of the most recent professional journal articles and abstracts on this topic. Contact NCADI at www.health.org/ or 800-729-6686.

- *Physician's Guide to Domestic Violence: How to ask the Right Questions and Recognize Abuse: Another way to save life* - This handbook for physicians gives an overview of domestic violence as well as practical advice on how to begin incorporating domestic violence intervention and prevention into medical practice. The role of alcohol and drugs in domestic violence is also addressed. Salber, P.R.; Talaiaferro, E., Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1995.

- Join Together Monthly Action Kit on Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence, July, 1994. Contact Join Together at info@jointogether.org or 617-437-1500.

Community leaders

David R. Anderson
Director of Special Projects
National Center for Victims of Crime
2111 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201
Tel: 703-276-2880
Fax: 703-276-2889

Former Representative Barbara Gray
220 Edmunds Road
Framingham, MA 01701
Tel: 508-877-0587

Rhonda Ferdinand
Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney
Office of Special Narcotics'
Manhattan District Attorney's Office
80 Centre Street, Room 628A
New York, NY 10013
Tel: 212-815-0473
Fax: 212-815-0120

Community Stories

Stories listed below are reprinted from Join Together Online. Similar stories can be found at www.jointogether.org.

The Milwaukee Women's Center, Inc.
The Milwaukee Women's Center addresses both domestic violence and substance abuse through its comprehensive program for women. They have a certified mental health/alcohol and drug abuse outpatient clinic in which clinical social workers and substance abuse counselors (often one in the same) and a part-time psychiatrist provide short and long-term therapy in mental health and alcohol and other drug abuse treatment. The Center also provides emergency shelter and services for battered women and their children. Contact Carey Tradewell, 611 N. Broadway, Suite 230, Milwaukee, WI 53202; Tel: 414-272-6199; Fax: 414-272-0757.

Domestic Violence Court Builds on Drug Court Model, Miami, FL
In Florida's Miami-Dade County, a Domestic Violence Court provides both support services for victims and supervision and rehabilitation for offenders. The court is a pretrial diversion program

that addresses both domestic violence and substance abuse issues. One of the main purposes of the program is to prevent murders, according to Lauren Lazarus, director of the court's Project Safe Families. "Fatality review" research shows that one-third of all homicides in Florida are related to domestic violence. Many domestic violence incidents are related to untreated substance abuse problems, experts say. Michael Lindsey, the Miami Police Department Administrator of domestic violence programs, says, "It's clear in my mind that there should be a national alliance between the domestic violence and substance abuse movements." But, he added, addiction treatment providers need to understand that the motivations of the criminal justice system may differ from their own when it comes to domestic violence cases.

With the domestic violence court, he added, assessment and communication are critical to seeing that those who want help can get it, while at the same time ensuring that offenders who are likely to return to violence stay off the streets. In Miami, offenders undergo a battery of substance abuse and mental health tests, which assist prosecutors and judges in determining whether an individual offender is a candidate for diversion. The level of offense is not the only determinant: On the one hand, for instance, some repeat domestic violence offenders are actually untreated substance abusers and can be helped by treatment; on the other hand, Lindsey said, even misdemeanor domestic violence offenses can be a red flag that intervention is required.

Treatment providers also need to realize that programs that are based on the concept of "powerlessness" over alcohol or other drugs don't mesh well with those aimed at domestic violence offenders, who often feed on the power associated with dominating a spouse or partner. Conflict also may arise between counselors who look to the addict's family to provide support for recovery -- and domestic violence advocates, who may want to isolate the family from the offender.